

October 22, 2002

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David E. Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer

EMANCIPATION SERVICES/INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM QUARTERLY REPORT

On July 17, 2001, your Board instructed my office to oversee a number of activities related to improving the administration of the Emancipation Services/Independent Living Program (ES/ILP). We provided an initial report on our progress on September 26, 2001, a first quarterly status report on January 7, 2002, the second status report on April 18, 2002, and the third status report on July 18, 2002.

The attached report (Attachment I) summarizes the key activities conducted to strengthen the County's ES/ILP program during the last quarter. As outlined in our previous report, the work plan addresses the recommendations from Sharon Watson's August 28, 2001 report on ES/ILP, as well as those of the County Economy and Efficiency Commission's February 2002 report.

As you will see, the bulk of the overall ES/ILP Program design work – as outlined in the Emancipation Interim Team's (Team) initial work plan – is now complete. Several program partners, both public and private, voiced support for the Team to stay in place until a permanent Director for the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is hired and the re-designed program is in place. In order to continue the momentum on this vital work, I have extended the consultant's contracts from October 1, 2002 to various individual phase-out dates, beginning February 28, 2003 and ending June 30, 2003, as indicated in Attachment II.

The Team, during this transition and implementation phase, will focus its attention on:

- Assisting the involved County departments and community agencies to begin implementing and integrating the many program improvements

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- Developing the new service delivery infrastructure and defining the required staffing
- Launching a rollout of training for ILP and line staff in DCFS and the Probation Department on the re-designed program and their respective roles and responsibilities within it
- Preparing for the transition of program ownership and key program and administrative expertise and planning activities from the Team to departmental staff
- Finalizing the Program's positioning and governance.

The Design Team will continue its work in full swing. Critical partnerships have been formed which are contributing to making the Emancipation Program a success.

By June 30, 2003, the efforts of the Design Team will put in place an effective Emancipation Program that meets the needs of the County's emancipating youth.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information, or your staff may contact Kathy House at (213) 974-1323.

DEJ:DL
WLW:KH:kd

Attachments

C: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Chief Probation Officer
Interim Director, Children and Family Services
Director, Community and Senior Services
Director, Consumer Affairs
Director, Health Services
Director, Mental Health
Director, Public Social Services
Executive Director, Community Development Commission

EMANCIPATION SERVICES/INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM (ES/ILP) FOURTH QUARTER STATUS REPORT

Workplan Achievements:

1. Program and Services to Youth:

A. Create a Countywide Network of Alumni Centers:

- Negotiated and signed a one-year agreement with Mt. San Antonio College to locate an Alumni Center on campus in the Community Education Center complex. This new site, scheduled to open next month, will serve as a resource center for youth residing in the eastern portion of SPA 3 and those in adjacent counties of Riverside and San Bernardino (youth emancipating from Los Angeles County remain eligible even when residing outside the County). This site will be the first facility with Emancipation Services/ILP staff from both Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Probation. The departmental staff will be joined by Campus Peer Mentoring Program staff from the Community College Foundation. The Team is now securing appropriate furnishings and identifying initial staff for the Center.
- Plans are being finalized to establish an Alumni Center within the Community Development Commission (CDC) Community Resource Center in Whittier by December. The array of service options available at this site will enable a variety of core resources to be offered to emancipating foster youth, such as health care, a computer lab, job development services, the Teen Hot Line, etc.
- Potential sites in Long Beach, Hollywood, Compton and the Antelope Valley are now being investigated.

B. Simplify and Strengthen Case Planning for Eligible Youth:

- Finalized the Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) Transmittal and Supplemental Form, which consolidates three forms previously required (414, 5200, and the 5205-B).
- Developed a TILP training curriculum, with the assistance of the Momentum Group, which has been presented to three groups of staff. Plans are now underway for a full roll-out of training, beginning in November, involving Probation and DCFS case managers. A component of this curriculum includes a training video, created by the Group, of a youth, caregiver and case worker collectively working to

develop a complete TILP. In addition, a comprehensive training manual with examples of model TILPs and detailed descriptions of the planning process was developed.

- Planned and scheduled a Youth, Caregiver, Case Manager/DPO Conference for November 2, 2002 in Torrance. This Conference will bring together these three key participant groups – for the very first time in Los Angeles County – to inform them about the new TILP planning process and to solicit their feedback. The information shared at this day-long session will be consistent with the training given to departmental staff. A conference handbook is being developed to guide future planning efforts for the Youth, Caregiver, Case Manager/DPO Conferences now being planned in each of the other SPAs.

C. Develop Mentorship Programs for Eligible Youth, especially those with Special Needs

- The newly formed DCFS/Probation/Los Angeles County Bar Association mentoring partnership – Bridges to the Future – has been inaugurated. This Program has successfully recruited and trained a new group of mentors and is now in the process of pairing mentors with youth. The kick-off event for both mentors and youth is set for October 26, 2002. A second group of prospective mentors will participate in an initial training session on December 7, 2002 and will be matched with youth in January. Outreach is now being conducted to attract other Bar affiliates to the Bridges Program.
- A mentoring resource directory is being finalized and will be incorporated into the ILP Website by the end of the year.

D. Create a Strong, Integrated, Countywide Housing Program

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Community Development Commission (CDC) and DCFS has been negotiated – with a sub-agreement between the CDC and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) – for the CDC to oversee a 3-year Housing Expansion project. The Request for Proposals (RFP), now being finalized by LAHSA, makes available \$1,340,000 of funding over six months of the FY 2002-03 plus \$2.5 million for each of the following two fiscal years. The funding will support the development of much needed additional emergency shelter care, transitional housing, and housing locators to better meet the needs of emancipated foster youth. Contracts are expected to be signed in the spring. This MOU will be presented to your Board for approval within the next few weeks.

- The Team coordinated and chaired quarterly meetings of the Housing Roundtable for the past year. Meetings have grown to include up to 100 providers and change location between sites so participants can view and learn from each others' programs. These meetings are becoming a key mechanism for linking current providers to critical program and funding information and to future potential partnerships, while encouraging prospective providers to establish new housing programs. Roundtable participants are so enthusiastic about this forum that they have requested to meet twice as often.

E. Integrate and Expand Youth Employment Programs

- Developed a draft Skill Center Enhancement Plan that will expand and integrate ES/ILP and Community and Senior Services (CSS) job preparation and placement programs for both pre-emancipating and emancipated foster youth.
- Working with CSS to assume the contracting and monitoring responsibilities for the current ES/ILP Vocational Skills Center Programs. This partnership, when established, will enable more foster youth to receive job readiness and career development services, as well as lengthen their program participation time from the current 2.5 months for pre-emancipated youth to as many as eight years (until the youth's 24th birthday).

2. Administration/Management:

A. Establish a Comprehensive ES/ILP Communications Capacity:

- Design Team members, in conjunction with DCFS and Probation ILP Coordinators, have continued grassroots outreach meetings/events across the County since January, presenting to over 50 groups and involving approximately 2,500 people from all stakeholder groups.
- Four of seven planned Staff Outreach Meetings have been held with DCFS and Probation case workers, supervisors and regional administrators, as well as ES/ILP staff, to preview the emerging Emancipation Program Improvement Plan and seek input on the proposed service delivery changes and staff reorganization. The Interim Team Leader, Division Chief of Emancipation Services, and the Acting Program Director for Probation ES/ILP have been personally presenting and dialoguing with staff in an attempt to improve information flow throughout DCFS and Probation. The same presentation will also be shared with community groups and stakeholders.

- The new website, www.ilponline.org, is almost ready for its official public launch. The site has been previewed extensively by youth, community organizations and staff groups for comment and refinement. After some initial testing with internal audiences, the site is now undergoing final revisions and adjustments during the month of October.
- A website Promotion Plan has been drafted for a November start-date. Activities under consideration include: a possible Board Motion, Kick-Off Reception, Poster, Flyer, Outreach Meetings, Public Service Announcements, etc.
- A full Spanish version of the entire website is under construction and schedules for completion by the end of November. Summary information will also be available online, by the end of December, in six additional threshold languages – Armenian, Cambodian, Cantonese, Korean, Mandarin and Vietnamese.
- The website has been enhanced to offer users the capability of printing individual pages in a printer-friendly format, and downloading a comprehensive program booklet which contains all available web information.
- A first draft of a Communications/Outreach Plan for FY 2002-03 is under review by the Design Team, to be finalized by early November. The plan encompasses website promotion as well as a major push to continue grassroots outreach presentations throughout the community.

B. Develop a Data, Reporting and Tracking System for Eligible Youth

In preparation for the ES/ILP Tracking System RFP Statement of Work being developed under the leadership of the Service Integration Branch (SIB), the following activities have been completed:

- Finalized data fields and management reports for the ES/ILP tracking system.
- Developed sample report templates and screen displays for the system.
- Identified additional system functional and design specifications for the system.
- Identified system users and access groups for the system.

- Worked with SIB, Probation and DCFS Information Technology Services (ITS) departments to determine the system interface requirements. This will include a view-only capability for existing data in the Child Welfare System/Case Management System (CWS/CMS), Juvenile Court Management System (JCMS) and Probation ILP tracking systems.
- Developed a Youth Self-Report Questionnaire for emancipated youth. The questionnaire will measure well-being in the County's five outcome areas, gather self-report data, provide information about youth attitudes towards the ES/ILP program, as well as their recommendations for improving the program.

With the tremendous assistance given the Design Team by SIB, DCFS and Probation ITS staff, we expect the Tracking System RFP to be released next month and a vendor selected by the beginning of 2003.

C. Create a Decentralized, More Timely Checkwriting Mechanism for Eligible Youth

- Began a series of meetings on September 16, 2002 with DCFS, Probation and Auditor-Controller staff to create an ES/ILP checkwriting capacity at key program sites (Alumni Centers, Central Juvenile Hall and Regional Offices). This would allow emancipated foster youth, in particular, to drop into any service center and receive timely reimbursement for allowable expenditures (e.g., tuition, books and supplies, rent deposits, work uniforms, etc.). The goal is for eligible youth to receive reimbursement checks within 48 hours of their request. By decentralizing this function and providing adequate financial controls, the current backlog of approximately 700 check requests (accumulated since early summer) should not re-occur.

3. Program Development/Implementation:

A. Re-Design Service Delivery Infrastructure:

- Created a proposed service delivery plan that decentralizes services in order to provide more immediate, convenient, and effective access to resources for both pre-emancipated and emancipated foster youth. Began by mapping where eligible youth, both DCFS and Probation, are located across Los Angeles and then placed service hubs in each of the four key geographic areas. Each hub, to be co-located at a regional office, will be served by four Alumni Centers and will offer the entire array of ES/ILP Program resources, including housing referrals, employment services, life skills and educational programs,

checkwriting, etc. A centrally-located Program Support Center (PSC) will house administrative and management staff, as well as program experts, who will oversee hub and Alumni Center operations, further program and policy development, acquire additional funding and resources, plan special events, keep the website current, orchestrate program communications, handle inquiries, create program materials, etc. Attachments III, IV, V and VI contain further details on the layout of the revised service delivery system.

- Working to finalize a staffing reorganization, using existing personnel items, to support the new program infrastructure. Identified the necessary staffing for the Alumni Centers, Hubs, and Program Support Center and have created preliminary job descriptions for the PSC staff.
- Hired a former foster youth to be the ES/ILP Program's first Emancipation Ombudsman. Berisha Black, an active member of the California Youth Connection (CYC) and a strong youth advocate, is a college graduate who spent 16 years in the County's foster care system. She is currently housed at the DCFS Emancipation Division offices in Pasadena and can be reached at (626) 229-3849 or at BlackBB@dcfs.co.la.ca.us. At work since September, she is already handling dozens of cases and has developed a referral/tracking form to document all incoming youth requests/complaints and how they are resolved. She has been an extremely valuable member of the Design Team since its beginning, bringing to it a much needed perspective and sensitivity.

4. Design Team/Departmental Transition Plan:

- Developed an Interim Team Transition Plan that charts the Team's timetable for transitioning out, beginning in February 2003, and the major deliverables to be accomplished by each Team member before they leave (Attachment II). A second piece shows the overlap between the new incoming PSC staff and each outgoing Team member (Attachment VII).
- Currently discussing what the Design Team-like mechanism will be needed in the future to ensure continued, shared ownership of the ES/ILP Program across key county departments and community agencies and sustain strong, collaborative program and policy development.
- The Emancipation Oversight Committee was reconvened on September 10, 2002 by the Commission for Children and Families. It is now working on reconstituting its membership and redefining its role and responsibilities in relationship to the re-designed program.